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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY
Washington, D. C.

WIREWORMS

Wireworms are the jointed, hard, brown to yellow, wormlike young of the click beetles. They often do great damage to potatoes, carrots, beets, onions, beans and other crops by burrowing through the roots or cutting the plant off under the ground. The burrows are usually small in diameter and extend into the roots from 1/4 to 1/2 an inch or more. Frequently the worms themselves may be found protruding from the burrows. The insects have a long life-cycle, from three to four years being spent in the larval stage.

There is no entirely satisfactory method of preventing damage by wireworms. The eastern forms of wireworms are usually more abundant in sod lands than in fields which are under cultivation each year. This being the case and since wireworms have a life cycle of from three to four years, it is not a good plan from the standpoint of wireworm damage to have potatoes follow sod land or any other green manure crop. We believe that considerable damage to the potato crop and other root crops which are very susceptible to injury can be reduced by planting these crops in lands which have been under cultivation throughout the season for at least two years. Such crops as tomatoes, melons and beans may support a wireworm infestation which would be damaging to potatoes and other root crops because of the loss of market value of such crops when they bear feeding scars of the wireworms.

Soil fumigation is effective under some conditions in destroying these pests. The most effective soil fumigant for wireworms is carbon disulphide. A circular is enclosed which deals with this material as a soil fumigant in the Pacific northwest. It is also useful against other soil-infesting forms such as white grubs. Carbon disulphide is injurious to plant growth and must be applied when the land is free of the crop and at a time when the wireworms are near the surface. The treatment is most effective if the chemical is applied when the land is in a good tillable condition.

TRUCK CROP AND GARDEN
INSECT INVESTIGATIONS

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